

Hello Missouri Educators!

I am delighted to introduce myself as the new Director of Gifted Programs for the state of Missouri. I grew up in West St. Louis County, and I am a proud St. Louis girl! I attended Parkway Schools as a child and was brought back to my roots in 1999 as an Assistant Principal at Sorrento Springs Elementary School in the district. Prior to that, I was an administrator and teacher in the Rockwood



School District. In 2000, I became the Coordinator for Gifted Education in Parkway, where I then spent 17+ years molding the gifted education program, which is now called the Parkway MOSAICS Gifted Program. Some of the improvements made during my tenure were the expansion of the MOSAICS Gifted Program to incorporate four levels of service, including Level IV, which is the MOSAICS Academy for Highly and Exceptionally Gifted Students. I also took on the role of Coordinator of Grants & Funding in 2003, where I oversaw all federal title programs and authored numerous successful grants for the district.

On June 30, 2017, I retired from Parkway. However, I remained very passionate about public education, especially gifted education. Upon retirement, I felt unsettled and could not fight the gnawing desire to continue to contribute and work to have an impact in the field. When the position of Director of Gifted Programs was posted and I received an email notification, I knew this was my calling. Little did I know that I would soon be commuting from “the Lou” to Jeff City! In my new role, as Director of Gifted Programs, I feel that it is extremely important that I take the time to understand where our state is, district by district, in serving gifted students. One of my first charges is to identify what districts are currently implementing, and analyze how the programs have changed over time. In doing so, I have been pleasantly surprised to see the number of districts that have expanded their services to include not only a solid gifted program, but also offering different levels of service, similar to the Response to Intervention model that many districts are utilizing for students who struggle. I am also pleased to see that many districts have submitted proposals to the Department to refine their screening and identification procedures. These districts are now implementing new alternative identification processes to ensure that those students who have been historically underrepresented through traditional identification measures are now being identified and served in their gifted program.

As I continued to assess the current reality of gifted programming in Missouri, I have also realized that there are needs in the gifted arena. There are districts with declining enrollment in gifted programs, and there are districts that could use support in reshaping gifted programming in their district. This will be very important as I work within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop web applications and house resources that are readily available for all school districts and stakeholders to easily access. There are so many outstanding models in the state of Missouri, and for districts that are located in rural settings or do not have expertise in the area of

gifted programming, I think it is vital that they are able to easily access exemplary curriculum and instruction and models of service delivery. There are also so many excellent teachers who have developed and solidified gifted curriculum through a research based curriculum development process. These teachers need to be commended and their work needs to be showcased for all teachers.

I would also like to research how the state can incentivize districts to expand gifted services, and this will be a priority as I work with the Department on the development and implementation of MSIP 6.

I feel that I am fortunate in this role as I have great support in Missouri, support that other states are not afforded. The Gifted Association of Missouri, all of the excellent and progressive school districts with stellar gifted programs in the state, the Gifted Advisory Council for the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Gifted Resource Council, St. Louis Association for Gifted Education, and the many universities with gifted programs that support certification and masters' work in the field of gifted education are all vital in our efforts to

bring gifted education to the forefront in the state of Missouri. We are also very fortunate to have the lobbying efforts of Kyna Iman. She has been instrumental in the passing of recent legislation for funding for the Missouri Scholar's Academy, the Fine Arts Academy, and legislation to continue to ensure accountability measures are in place for all districts with state approved gifted education programs.

I feel that an integral part of my position will be to lead a process where all of these efforts and entities come together to create a shared vision for the future of gifted education in the state of Missouri, and a timeline for action. I am excited by this challenge and I believe wholeheartedly that together, we can revitalize gifted education and achieve a new path of excellence for gifted programming throughout our state. These gifted students, our gifted students, are a truly unique population of students who learn differently. They are at-risk of falling through the cracks, underachieving, and suffering socially and emotionally; and they deserve nothing less than a call to action and a clear vision for their future.



On a personal note, I am happily married to my wonderful husband, Sam Farinella, and have two daughters; JoAnna, who lives in Ballwin, Mo. and Gabrielle, who lives and works in Vail, Colorado. I also have three stepchildren, Vince, who lives in St. Louis, and will be married in September to his fiancée, Brittany, Carly, who lives in Fayetteville, Arkansas and Nicole, who attends Maryville University's nursing program in Chesterfield, MO. My wonderful parents, Donald and Patricia Appelbaum live in Dardene Prairie, MO. I enjoy reading, jogging, traveling and spending time with my children, my four siblings, and my many nieces and nephews. I am also active in the Parkway Alumni Association (having graduated in 1978 from Parkway North). I am proud to say that I was inducted into the Parkway Alumni Hall of Fame in 2012.

Here's to the crazy ones.

The misfits.

The rebels.

The troublemakers.

The round pegs in the square holes.

The ones who see things differently.

They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can praise them, disagree with them, quote them, disbelieve them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing that you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They invent. They imagine. They heal. They explore. They create. They inspire. They push the human race forward. Maybe they have to be crazy. How else can you stare at an empty canvas and see a work of art? Or sit in silence and hear a song that's never been written? Or gaze at a red planet and see a laboratory on wheels? And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the ones who are crazy enough to think that they can change the world, are the ones who do.

– Apple Computer Advertisement

I look forward to meeting with stakeholders, working with the Gifted Association of Missouri, and building relationships with teachers, parents, students and administrators throughout the state. I am excited about the future, and confident that together we can forge a path to excellence in gifted education.

Sincerely,



Professional Preparation/ Education

B.S., Elementary Education, University of Missouri-St. Louis, 1992

Gifted Certification, Maryville University of Saint Louis, 1994

M.A., Educational Processes, emphasis: Gifted Education, Maryville University of Saint Louis, 1997

Administrative Certification, Maryville University of Saint Louis, 2000

Doctor of Education, Educational Administration /Leadership, Saint Louis University, 2003

Work History

2003- 2017 Coordinator of District Grants & Funding and Curriculum Coordinator of Gifted Education, Instructional Services Center, Parkway School District, St. Louis, Missouri

2001-2003 Curriculum Coordinator for Gifted Education, Instructional Services Center, Parkway School District, St. Louis, Missouri

2000-2001 Assistant Principal, Sorrento Springs Elementary, Parkway School District, Chesterfield, Missouri

1999-2000 Administrative Intern, Kellison Elementary School, Rockwood School District, Eureka, Missouri

1996-1999 Teacher, Grade One and Grade Four, The Center for Creative Learning, Rockwood School District, Wildwood, Missouri

1995-1996 Teacher, Grade One-Five, John Weldon Elementary, Francis Howell School District, St. Peters, Missouri

1993-1995 Teacher, Grade One-Five, Daniel Boone Elementary, Francis Howell School District, St. Peters, Missouri

Publications and Presentations

Pupillo (Farinella), DM. (1998-1999). "*Utilizing Governmental Agencies to Advance Student Empowerment*", National Association for Gifted Children, National Gifted Conference, Tampa, Florida

Pupillo (Farinella), DM. (1998-99). "*Issue Investigation and Action Research*", National Association for Gifted Children, National Gifted Conference, Tampa, Florida

Pupillo (Farinella), DM. (2000-2001). "*Students Problem Solving and Learning through Aquatic Systems and Human Interaction*", National Association for Gifted Children, National Gifted Conference, Atlanta, Georgia

Pupillo (Farinella), DM. (2000-2002). "*Whooo's Thinking: An Investigative Science Unit*", National Association for Gifted Children, National Gifted Conference, Denver, Colorado

Pupillo (Farinella), DM. (2000). "*Critical Thinking and Problem Solving*", Francis Howell School District, St. Peters, Missouri

Pupillo (Farinella), DM. (2003). "The Relationship Between Elementary School Principals Leadership Behaviors and the Implementation of the Accelerated Schools School Improvement Model, Saint Louis University, St. Louis, Missouri

Pupillo (Farinella), DM. (2009). "*Serving Highly and Exceptionally Gifted Students through the MOSAICS Academy*

Self Contained Gifted Program”, National Association for Gifted Children, National Conference, St. Louis, Missouri
Farinella, DM. (2009-2012) *“Mathematicians in Residence (MIR)”*, Math and Science Partnership Grant, Award Recipient on behalf of Parkway School District, Federal Department of Education (1.5 million dollars over 3 years)
Farinella, DM (2012-2015) *“Scientists in Residence (SIR)”*, Math and Science Partnership Grant, Award Recipient on behalf of Parkway School District, Federal Department of Education (1.5 million dollars over 3 years)
Farinella, DM. (2015-2018) *“Mathematicians in Residence II(MIR-II)” and “Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematicians in Residence (STEM-R)”*, Math and Science Partnership Grant, Award Recipient on behalf of Parkway School District, Federal Department of Education (1.5 million dollars over 3 years)